

USDA AWARDS \$100,000 GRANT TO PRESERVE RURAL HOUSING

December 15, 2009 - USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider today presents a ceremonial check for a \$100,000 grant to the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Tribe to repair and rehabilitate homes of various very-low income Belcourt homeowners.



L to R: Chuck DeCoteau (councilman); Janice Azure (councilwoman); Cindy Malaterre (councilwoman); Sharon Poitra (Block Grant); Jasper Schneider, Rural Development State Director; Richard Marcellais (chairman); James Baker (councilman); Ted Henry, and Leonard Belgarde (HIP)

The grant is administered through the USDA's Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant program.

"The Obama Administration and I believe that every citizen deserves to live in safe and affordable housing," Schneider said. "This grant will help rural residents make the necessary repairs to improve their living conditions."

In addition to Rural Development's grant, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will provide \$500,000 and the Home Improvement Program (HIP) will provide \$122,500 toward the

needed community repairs program. The funds will be used for repairs to remove health and safety hazards, to rehabilitate homes to meet current standards and codes, and to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

"The grant will directly improve the quality of life for approximately 20 homeowners and support economic activity in the Rolette County area," said Schneider. "I congratulate the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Tribe on their successful grant application and applaud the organization's leadership for its willingness to serve the greater Belcourt community as a grant administrator."

Since 1996, thirteen Housing Preservation Grants from Rural Development totaling \$773,368.23 have been leveraged with \$3,684,438 from the HIP and CDBG programs to assist 200 families with their housing needs in the Turtle Mountain Area.

Rural Development recognizes Leonard (Lenny) Belgarde, HIP Director, and Sharon Poitra, CDBG Administrator for their dedicated commitment in securing this grant funding to address the urgent housing needs in the Turtle Mountain area for the past 14 years.

Rural Development's Housing Preservation Grants help ensure that rural single and multi-family housing is adequate, meets current safety standards and is accessible to people with disabilities. Grants are awarded to non-profits, (including faith-based organizations), local governments and Native American tribes, who in turn provide loans, grants or loan/grant combinations to individuals who need home repairs.

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa is located in the Center of North American Coalition (CONAC) Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone. The CONAC REAP is a regional collaboration of federal, state, and local representatives working to stem the out migration of people and jobs from the region.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available by calling the state office at (701) 530-2050 or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

In Fiscal Year 2009, USDA Rural Development provided \$56.4 million in housing programs, \$79.7 million in business and community programs, and \$647.1 million in electric programs to North Dakota citizens.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.